

Activity 2: Investigating Elements

Guiding Question: How can scientists use physical properties to identify elements?

Key Words: *atom, density, dissolve, element, malleability, matter, physical property, property, solubility, state*

Get Started:

1. Read the introduction and Guiding Question to Activity 2, “Investigating Elements,” in your Student Book.

2. Look at the list of elements shown. What other elements do you know?

aluminum	iron
carbon	mercury
copper	nitrogen
germanium	sulfur

3. Look at Visual Aid 2.1, “Periodic Table of Elements,” which is attached to this packet. Approximately 90 of the elements are the building blocks of nearly all materials on Earth, both natural and synthetic.

Do the Activity:

1. Read Procedure Steps 1-2 in your Student Book.

2. Watch the LABsent video (found here: [LABsent Chemistry of Materials 2](#)), and record your data. Each time the video says to record, you may want to pause the video to give you ample time to complete your observations. Record your observations on Student Sheet 2.1, “Physical Properties of Elements,” which is attached to this packet.

3. Read and complete Procedure Steps 3-4 in your Student Book.

Analysis:

1. Why do you think it is important for scientists to observe multiple physical properties in order to identify an element? Use examples from the data you collected in this activity to support your ideas.

Name _____

Date _____

2. Copy the lists of words below:

element

gas

metal

iron

solid

property

carbon

liquid

malleable

water

metal

soluble

nitrogen

state

dense

- Look for a relationship between the words in each list. Cross out the word that does not belong.
- Circle the word or phrase that includes all the other words.
- Explain how the word or phrase you circled is related to the other words in the list.

3. Based on the sample of eight elements you have observed so far, and assuming the rest of the elements fit the same pattern, would you expect most elements to be solid, liquid, or gas at room temperature? Explain.

4. When added to water at room temperature, most gases form bubbles that float to the top of the water and release into the air. What does this tell you about the density of gases?

Name _____

Date _____

5. Describe what you have learned about the physical properties of aluminum in this activity and the previous activity. What information, if any, from these activities would be helpful in deciding if aluminum would be a good choice for making a drink container?

6. In this activity, you recorded the appearance of each element you observed. Think of and explain two examples from this activity in which appearance does not help identify an element.

Name _____

Date _____

STUDENT SHEET 2.1**PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF ELEMENTS**

Element name and symbol	State (solid, liquid, or gas?)	Appearance	Malleability (flexible?)	Solubility (dissolves in water?)	Density (sinks or floats?)
Aluminum (Al)					
Carbon (C)					
Copper (Cu)					
Germanium (Ge)					
Iron (Fe)					
Mercury (Hg)					
Nitrogen (N)					
Sulfur (S)					